

The Final Word Protocol

Purpose:

The purpose of this discussion format is to give each person in the group an opportunity to have his or her ideas, understandings, and perspective enhanced by hearing from others. With this format, the group can explore an idea, clarify their thinking, and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Roles:

Facilitator/timekeeper and participants

Process:

- Group Members cluster together (either around a table, with chairs, etc.) and identify a facilitator/timekeeper. The role of the facilitator is to keep the process moving, to keep it clear and directed to the task at hand, and to keep time so that everyone has the opportunity to have others respond to his/her thoughts.
- Each person needs to have one "most" significant quote, thought, section from the text. It is often helpful to identify a "back-up" thought.
- The first person begins by stating what "struck him/her the most" about the text and directs the group to the place in the text where the ideas is referenced. The person **MUST ONLY** share **ONE** thought and **ONE THOUGHT ONLY**. Then, *in less than 3 minutes*, this person shares his/her thoughts.
- Continuing around the circle, each person responds to that thought and what the first person said, briefly, *in less than one minute*. The purpose of the response is to expand on the first person's thinking, to provide a different look at the concept, to clarify thinking about the topic, and/or question the person's assumptions about the issue (although at this time there is no response from the presenter).
- After going around the circle with each person having responded for *less than one minute*, the person who began has "the final word." In no more than one minute, the first person responds to what has been said. Now what is his/her thinking? What is his/her reaction to what he/she has heard?
- Continue the process with the next person in the group responding to another text passage in the same manner as the first person.